GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:381
ANSWERED ON:21.04.2008
WHEAT VIRUS
Botcha Lakshmi Smt. Jhansi;Yaskhi Shri Madhu Goud

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations has warned wheat producing nations including India of a rapidly spreading Ug 99 wheat virus; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the preventive measures taken thereon?

Answer

MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR)

(a) and (b): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) AND (b) OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 381 DUE FOR REPLY ON 21ST APRIL, 2008.

(a): Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations has warned wheat producing nations including India about the spread of Ug 99, an African race of black (stem) rust fungus of wheat.

(b): According to the experts, the effect, speed and the route of the movement of the fungus is unpredictable in near future. Therefore, at present, it is only an apprehension that this African race may reach India.

A vigil is kept on the movement of this race by Directorate of Wheat Research, Karnal, through international collaboration. Indian Council of Agricultural Research, in collaboration with the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Centre (CIMMYT), Mexico has taken steps to identify varieties possessing resistance against the new race of the stem rust fungus. A regular surveillance for pest and disease emergence in the country is conducted to take emergency measures, wherever required, through the Central Integrated Pest Management Centres, the Indian Council of Agricultural Research and the State Agricultural Universities and Departments.

Also, the Plan Quarantine regulatory system in the country prevents the introduction and spread of exotic pests and diseases that are destructive to crops by regulating/restricting the import of plant materials and plant products. Post entry quarantine inspection is undertaken to ensure that imported plant material is free from any pests and diseases.